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REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, and 4-22 are now present in this application.

The abstract and claims 1, 10 and 15 have been amended, claim 3 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein, and claim 22 has been presented. Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

The abstract and claim 10 stand objected to for certain informalities. In view of the foregoing amendments, it is respectfully submitted that these objections have been addressed. Reconsideration and withdrawal of any objection to the abstract are respectfully requested.

Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In view of the foregoing amendments, it is respectfully submitted that claim 10 particularly points out and distinctly claims the subject matter of the instant invention. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 USC 112, second paragraph rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7, 9-11 and 15-21 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by DEL CASTILLO et al., U.S. Patent 6,275,166. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over DEL CASTILLO et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 12-14 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over DEL CASTILLO et al. in view of BROWN, JR. et al., U.S. Patent 5,544,036. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The patent to DEL CASTILLO et al. describes a system for managing a distributed array of appliances that includes a headend computer having a low power main transceiver and a distributed array of relay units.

The system described in DEL CASTILLO et al. has only a single controller, namely the headend computer which controls the system. The relay units only act in response to commands given by the headend computer. The relay units are not controllers and are not able to generate a signal on their own hand upon reception of input from an appliance.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 14 are novel over DEL CASTILLO et al., as the system of DEL CASTILLO et al. does not have devices (relay units) that can act as I/O devices comprising a processor having means for generating an event signal in response to input received from an appliance or user.

Also, the system of DEL CASTILLO et al. manages a distributed array of appliances by use of a headend computer that controls each of a plurality of relay units, and wherein some of the relay units control appliances. These relay units comprise a transceiver, an interface for communicating with a local appliance and a microcomputer having first and second program instructions for directing communication between the transceiver and the interface.

The relay units of DEL CASTILLO et al. are units that can act only in response to commands from the headend computer, which means that the units cannot act in response to a received signal from an appliance.

The present invention provides devices having dual functionality, which devices can generate an event signal in response to input received from an appliance or user and at the same time act as repeaters in the system. By providing devices which also acts as I/O devices that can generate signals on their own, without the controller, the system becomes much more flexible and reliable, as the functionality is distributed to the devices instead of being present only in the central controller.

The devices acting as I/O devices can react to events such as inputs from an appliance or user, so that the device can transmit signals to a controller or other devices. The event signal being addressed to a controller or other devices and comprising information related to the event triggering the generation of the event signal. Typical events may be (referring to the published PCT application):

- Introducing a device in the system. The user actuates a button on the device and the device sends a signal to the controller in response thereto, see page 34, lines 22-23.
- A timer function activates an appliance connected to the device, the device transmits the new status of the appliance to the controller, see description of Event Table, page 37, lines 3-7.

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• A sensor connected to the device registers a change in a sensed parameter, the device receives an input from the sensor and generates and transmits a signal in response thereto, see page 10, line 29 to page 11, line 17.

Thereby, the main controller does not have to continuously inquire at every device whether it has received input or not.

The headend computer of DEL CASTILLO et al. controls each of the relay units, and the units cannot act on their own. Therefore the headend computer has to command the unit to act if it needs status information from the unit. This means that the each time a unit shall act, a signal must be send to the unit from the headend computer, and the unit responses to this signal and transmits a signal back to the computer. This results in at least two signal transmissions each time a unit has to act, which takes up bandwidth in the network.

In the system according to the invention, the I/O device can generate a signal on their own, which then saves bandwidth. By having one or more devices acting as controller a system is provided that is much more reliable, flexible and which takes up less bandwidth than the system according to DEL CASTILLO et al..

BROWN, JR. et al. describes a system including one or more controllers controlling one or more energy consuming devices. Each controller responds to a signal received from a central command center that establishes a schedule of events effecting the

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operation of each device and the controller schedules each device to be operated pursuant to the programmed schedule.

Thus, BROWN, JR. et al. teaches how to control energy devices (appliances) by using a plurality of controllers which act upon commands given by a central command center and not by use of controllers that can act "on their own".

Neither DEL CASTILLO et al. nor BROWN, JR. et al. teaches or suggests anything that would lead the skilled person to provide devices having dual functionality, i.e. devices that can generate an event signal in response to input received from an appliance or user, and which devices at the same time act as repeaters in the system.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the automated system set forth in independent claims 1, as well as its dependent claims, as well as the method for establishing an RF automation system network as set forth in independent claim 14, as well as its dependent claims, are neither taught nor suggested by the prior art utilized by the Examiner. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 USC 102(e) and 103 rejections are respectfully requested.

Favorable reconsideration and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Because the additional prior art cited by the Examiner has been included merely to show the state of the prior art and has not been utilized to reject the claims, no further comments concerning these documents are considered necessary at this time.

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In the event that any outstanding matters remain in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), the Applicants respectfully petition for a one (1) month extension of time for filing a response in connection with the present application and the required fee of \$55.00 is authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-2448.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOIASCH & BIRCH, LLP

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Attachment

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